

Message Text

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16

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2559

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LOURENCO MARQUES 0381

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, MZ, PO

SUBJECT: ROLE OF MOVEMENT OF ARMED FORCES (MFA)

REF: A) LISBON 1873; B) LUANDA 317; C) LOURENCO MARQUES 044

1. SUMMARY: INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN MOZAMBIQUE LEADS TO CONCLUSION THAT MFA MAY WELL BE, OR AT LEAST CONSIDERS ITSELF TO BE, THE POWER BEHIND JUNTA OF NATIONAL SALVATION (JSN).
END SUMMARY.

2. INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE INDICATES THAT THERE IS AN ACTIVE MFA COMMITTEE IN MOZAMBIQUE WITH HEADQUARTERS IN NAMPULA BUT WITH BRANCHES IN ALL MAIN MILITARY CENTERS WITH COMPLETE CONTROL OVER MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AND
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COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. ACCORDING TO BRITISH CORRESPONDENT,

DAVID MARTIN WHO HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MFA LEADERS BOTH IN LISBON AND IN MOZAMBIQUE, MOVEMENT STARTED ON SEPTEMBER 9, 1973 WHEN ABOUT 100 OFFICERS, MAINLY CAPTAINS, MET ON A FARM NEAR EVORA IN PORTUGAL TO DISCUSS PROMOTION POLICIES, WORK CONDITIONS, QUALITY OF COURSES AT ARMY INSTITUTE, AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS WHICH THEY FELT NEEDED CORRECTION. BY END OF DECEMBER, "MOVEMENT OF CAPTAINS", AS IT WAS THEN CALLED, HAD INCREASED TO OVER 1,000, MAINLY OF LOWER RANK OFFICERS BUT INCLUDING THREE LT. COL'S, AND CHANGED NAME TO ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (MFA). MOST MEMBERS WERE OFFICERS OF CAREER WHO CAME FROM LOWER CLASS, SOMETIMES ILLITERATE, FAMILIES. GROUP WAS RAPIDLY POLITICIZED BY YOUNG INTELLECTUAL MILITARY CONSCRIPTS FROM THE UNIVERSITIES, AND FROM PRACTICAL GRIEVANCES, INTEREST OF MFA NATURALLY TURNED TO POLITICS. AFTER JANUARY 1974 CIVILIAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN BEIRA, DIRECTED AGAINST ARMY OFFICERS' QUARTERS (REF C), GROUP BECAME CONVINCED THAT SITUATION WAS RAPIDLY GETTING OUT OF HAND AND REQUIRED DRASTIC COUNTER MEASURES. DETERMINED THAT ARMED FORCES SHOULD NOT GET THE BLAME FOR NOT WINNING THE WAR (AS THEY HAD IN GOA), MFA EVOLVED PLAN TO OVERTHROW PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT WITH TARGET DATE OF JULY OR AUGUST.

3. ACCORDING TO ONE MFA OFFICER, PUBLICATION OF SPINOLA BOOK TOOK MFA BY SURPRISE, ALMOST DESTROYED THEIR PLANS (FOR REASONS HE DID NOT EXPLAIN). IT ALSO PUSHED EVENTS AHEAD. PREMATURE MINI-COUP IN MARCH WAS REPORTEDLY EITHER A TRIAL RUN OR MORE LIKELY, BROUGHT ABOUT BY DGS STRATAGEY UNDER WHICH PREMATURE SIGNAL WAS GIVEN TO BEGIN THE COUP, IN HOPE OF BEING ABLE TO NIP WHOLE PLOT IN THE BUD DURING ENSUING CONFUSION.

4. NOT CLEAR WHETHER SPINOLA AND COSTA GOMES KNEW ABOUT THE COUP, BUT THEY APPARENTLY HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ITS PLANNING. ONE SOURCE INDICATES THAT WHEN THEY WERE INFORMED OF PLAN IN ADVANCE, THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD WORK. AS RESULT, CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF MFA MEMBERS HARBOR RESENTMENT AGAINST THEM.

5. AT PRESENT IT IS CLEAR THAT EACH MINISTER OF PROVISIONAL
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GOVERNMENT HAS AN MFA MEMBER ASSIGNED TO HIM TO ASCERTAIN THAT MFA PROGRAM IS FOLLOWED, FOR EXAMPLE, MINISTER OF INTER-TERRITORIAL COORDINATION, DE ALMEIDA SANTOS, IS BEING ACCOMPANIED ON HIS PRESENT VISIT TO MOZAMBIQUE BY LT. COL. SOUSA BELCHIOR, REPORTEDLY MEMBER OF MFA SEVEN-MAN POLITICAL COMMITTEE, WHO IS OBVIOUSLY KEEPING AN EYE ON MINISTER. MFA MEMBER ALSO APPARENTLY ASSIGNED TO EACH MEMBER OF JSN. IT IS EVEN RUMORED THAT MFA IS ALREADY BECOMING DISILLUSIONED

WITH PRESIDENT SPINOLA AND THINKING ABOUT DUMPING HIM. OTHER SOURCES INDICATE MFA HAS GIVEN SPINOLA ONE YEAR TO PRODUCE AND IF HE HASN'T SETTLED THINGS BY THEN, WILL SACK HIM. MFA OFFICER IN NAMPULA HAS BEEN QUOTED AS STATING TWO BIGGEST MISTAKES IN COUP WERE SPINOLA'S BOOK AND SPINOLA HIMSELF, AND THAT ONLY POINT ON WHICH THEY AGREE WITH SPINOLA IS THAT THERE CAN BE NO MILITARY SOLUTION TO WAR.

7. HENCE, FAR FROM BEING A MODERATING FORCE, ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE, MFA SEEMS HIGHLY DYNAMIC, WELL ORGANIZED GROUP WHICH WANTS TO FORCE SWIFT SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF OVERSEAS TERRITORIES. MAIN MFA GOAL IS TO LIQUIDATE THE OVERSEAS WARS, AND SOME BELIEVE THEY WILL FORCE SPINOLA GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT ANY COMPROMISE WITH LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WHICH WILL BRING ABOUT THIS END.

8. COMMENT: WHILE MFA MAY WELL CONSIDER ITSELF TO BE IN CHARGE, ITS MEMBERS MAY FIND THEMSELVES NOT AS ABLE TO CALL THE TUNE AS THEY MAY THINK. IF THEY TRY TO DUMP SPINOLA, WHAT OTHER SYMBOLIC PERSONAGE OF COMPARABLE STATURE AND WIDE ACCEPTANCE COULD THEY CALL ON? THEIR APPARENT PASSION FOR ANONYMITY, WHILE PROOF OF PURITY, MAY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO CAPTURE AND RETAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT. IN VIEW THEIR REPORTED POLITICAL INEXPERIENCE AND NAIVETE, THEY MAY FIND THEMSELVES OUTMANEUVERED BY THE MORE WIDELY KNOWN POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WHO ARE NOW ESTABLISHING THEIR OWN REPUTATIONS AND WHO MAY BE ABLE TO FIND WAYS OF UTILIZING MFA FOR THEIR OWN ENDS. END COMMENT.
VAN OSS

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